

SRIMADBHAGAVADGITA

Summary on

First Chapter

by

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- Note:
1. Portions in brackets are supplied ideas.
 2. Numbers in brackets indicate the verses.

(The setup in which the *Gītā*-teaching is imparted is the epic battle of *Mahābhārata*, fought between the *Pāñdavas* and *Kauravas*. *Arjuna*, the *Pāñdava*, discovers the problem of *samsāra* in the battlefield. He surrenders to Lord *Kṛṣṇa* seeking a solution. Then follows the great teaching.

If one should get the *Gītā*-wisdom, one should go through some important phases in one's life.

Firstly, one should discover the problem of *samsāra* for which *Gītā* happens to be a solution. Unless one discovers the disease, one will not seek medicine.

Secondly, one should become possessed by a sincere longing (*tivramumukṣā*) for freedom from *samsāra*. This alone can lead to committed and fruitful pursuit.

Thirdly, one should realise that one this problem cannot solve independently. The maximum that one can do, as a limited human being, is a rearrangement or a reshaping of the problem.

Finally, one should surrender to a *guru* seeking his guidance. When one discovers the *śiṣya* in one and surrenders to a *guru*, the ground is prepared for the *Gītā*-teaching to take place.

The entire first chapter and the first part of the second chapter are devoted to show these developments.)

The problem of *samsāra*, as shown in the first chapter, can be said to be the problem of attachment (*kṛpā* or *rāga*), grief (*śoka* or *viśāda*), and delusion (*moha*.) When one is not happy with oneself, one has to seek external aids. This leads to dependence and

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attachment. Since the conditions of the depended factors are unpredictable, the very peace of mind of that person is in trouble. A disturbed mind can make only faulty judgements complicating the matters further. Thus a vicious cycle is created. This, in short, is the problem of *samsāra*.

Coming to the text, we find, in the first twenty verses, a vivid description of the armies arrayed for the battle. After a brief instruction of *Duryodhana* to his commanders, *Bhiṣma*, Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, *Arjuna*, and others blow their conches, signalling the commencement of the battle. (1 to 20)

At this fateful moment, *Arjuna* commands Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, his charioteer, to place the chariot in the middle of the army to scrutinize the enemy-forces. The mischievous Lord brings the chariot in front of *Bhiṣma* and *Drona* and asks *Arjuna* to survey the army. (21 to 25)

(Till now *Arjuna* was convinced that his cousins are unrighteous (23) and he, as a *kṣatriya*, has to fight the battle to establish righteousness)

In a moment of weakness, *Arjuna* slips down from reason to relation. Instead of seeing the violators of *dharma*, he sees his beloved kith and kin. Naturally, *Arjuna* is overpowered by attachment. Then follow the twin offshoots of attachment viz. grief and delusion. (26 to 30)

In the next five verses, we see *Arjuna* expressing his intense grief which shakes him completely. This indicates the extent of his attachment.

Veiled by attachment, his discriminative power becomes inoperative and he commits a series of false judgments. Interestingly enough, *Arjuna* even quotes the scriptures to support his

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unreasonable stand. Thus, *Arjuna* gets caught up in delusion which is depicted from the 36th verse upto the end of the chapter. (36 to 47)

In this way, *Arjuna* finds himself in the deep sea of attachment, sorrow, and delusion (*rāga*, *śoka*, and *moha*.) *Arjuna* sincerely wants to get out of this problem. He thinks that solution is to drop the battle. But, one corner of his mind is not convinced by this. At the same time, he has not realised that the problem is too deep for him to solve independently. Hence he doesn't surrender to *Kṛṣṇa* either. Thus caught up in a dilemma, *Arjuna* sits back on the chariot sorrowfully.

The main topics of this chapter are:

1. Description of the armies and the preparations.....1 to 20
2. *Arjuna's* chariot being placed in the middle
of the armies on his request21 to 25
3. *Arjuna's* change of mind leading to
attachment (*rāga*)26 to 28
4. *Arjuna's* grief (*śoka*).....25 to 34
5. *Arjuna's* delusion (*moha*).....35 to 47

Since *Arjuna's* grief is the main topic, this chapter is aptly called *Arjunavishāda-yoga*.
